

VSS Pre-Conference Session: Best Practices for Online Teaching

- I. Introduction of Topic “Big Picture:” Welcome & Goals – Pre-Conference “Chair/Organizer” (40 minutes)**
 - a. Kristin Kipp
 - b. Includes course walkthrough highlighting key features
 - c. Includes interview with student via Skype re: What makes a good online course and a good online teacher?

- II. Topic Experts for Panel 1: Connecting and Creating Community with Students in the Online Environment (50 minutes total)**
 - a. **Presentations:** Presenters should plan to speak for about 10 minutes and provide a brief overview of their teaching situation as well as an introduction to some of their best practices in creating community in the online environment.
 - i. Presenter 1 (10 minutes): Tara Park, Pennsylvania Virtual
 - ii. Presenter 2 (10 minutes): Andrew Vandenheuvel, NOTY finalist
 - iii. Presenter 3 (10 minutes): Jonny O’Lonegan, Academy 20
 - b. **Questions and Answers** with whole group (20 minutes): Please prepare for the questions below. We will also take questions from the audience.
 - i. If you were talking to a brand new online teacher, what would be the very first “go-to” strategy that you would suggest for creating community in an online classroom?
 - ii. What are some of the benefits and pitfalls of using social networking sites and/or texting to create community among students?
 - iii. What are some examples of group interaction (projects, discussion boards, etc.) within an online classroom and how do you make those interactions productive?
 - iv. How do you make sure that you truly know your students?
 - v. What do you do when a student disappears from your online classroom? How do you help them re-engage?

BREAK #1 - Networking (10 minutes)

- III. Topic Experts for Panel 2: Working with At-Risk Students in the Online Environment (50 minutes total)**
 - a. **Presentations:** Presenters should plan to speak for about 10 minutes and provide a brief overview of their teaching situation as well as an introduction to some of their best practices in working with at-risk students in the online environment.
 - i. Presenter 1 (10 minutes): Emily Parrish, NOTY finalist
 - ii. Presenter 2 (10 minutes): Tom Landon, NOTY finalist
 - iii. Presenter 3 (10 minutes): Rick Tanski, Academy 20

- b. **Questions and Answers** with whole group (20 minutes): Please prepare for the questions below. We will also take questions from the audience.
- i. At-risk students have often “checked out” of the school process. What do you do to help them re-engage with academics?
 - ii. Online learning is often considered a viable alternative for at-risk students to prevent dropout. What impact has that reputation had on online learning? How will it impact the future of the field?
 - iii. In your experience, what structures have been most successful for working with at-risk students? This could be course structures (student choice, self-paced, etc.) or support structures (counselors, advisors, etc.) within your school.

BREAK #2 - Networking (10 minutes)

IV. Roundtable Breakouts (40 minutes)

- a. **Facilitators:** Please prepare approximately 10 discussion questions and/or ideas for your table. You'll be in charge of facilitating a discussion on your assigned topic for the 40 minute session. Participants will probably have a lot of questions too and we should allow flexibility for that.
- Topics and Facilitators (# of tables and topics to be adjusted based on attendance):
 - Differentiation: Tara Park, Pennsylvania Virtual
 - Academic Integrity and Plagiarism: Tom Landon, NOTY finalist
 - Motivating Students: Andrew Vandenheuvel, NOTY finalist
 - Assessment and Providing Feedback: Michael Arsenault, Academy 20
 - Facilitating Discussion Boards: **Facilitator Needed**
 - Using Synchronous Tools : **Facilitator Needed**
 - Strategies for Hybrid & Blended Learning: Emily Parrish, NOTY finalist
 - Time Management: Kristin Kipp
 - One facilitator per table with key questions to start conversation

V. Summary: Key Areas to Consider (30 minutes)

- Share out “take away ideas” from table groups
- Recommendations and resources
- Conclusion & Wrap-Up